



Van H. Wanggaard

Wisconsin State Senator

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CONTACT: Van Wanggaard

608-266-1832

DEMOCRATS REWRITE RIOT HISTORY TO HIDE EVERS' FAILURES

Last month, in a flurry of press releases, area Democrats tried to rewrite history to ease the conscience of Governor Evers for his failures of last August. Democrats tried to convince Kenoshans that Tony Evers did all he could to prevent the Jacob Blake riots from spinning out of control but the people who were literally crying and begging for help know better.

Congressman Bryan Steil recently did a good job breaking down what those Democrats were saying - that Evers did all they asked of him. Of course, what those Democrats didn't say was that what Kenosha officials sought from Steil, and what law enforcement told me they needed, was far different than what Governor Evers delivered, at least initially.

Here's what Congressman Steil can't say that I will - the reason local officials contacted Steil was that they had little or no confidence Governor Evers would provide the necessary help, and they were proven right.

Governor Evers initial comments following the incident were so over-the-top, so out of line, so inflammatory that they did more to incite rioting than calm it. Would you look for help from someone who was making the situation worse? Of course not. No rational person would. Evers' initial comments, and those he continued to make during the week, were so bad that 4 days later police groups asked Evers to just stop talking about Kenosha.

Think about that. The leader of our state continuing to make a bad situation worse. People had so little faith that Evers would say the right thing to calm the situation that they asked him to just say nothing.

I first asked Governor Evers to call in the National Guard about 9 P.M. Sunday night - 4 hours after the incident. Twenty-four hours later, while rioting was beginning for a second night, 125 Guard Troops arrived - far less than needed. Governor Evers claims this was the best he could do on 24 hours' notice.

We know that's not true, though. When Milwaukee asked for help to control crowds during game 6 of the NBA Finals, 200 troops were delivered in less than 24 hours. Milwaukee got 200 troops for a joyous celebration in less than a day. It took 2 nights of violence and tens of millions of dollars of

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State Capitol, P.O. Box 7882, Madison, WI 53707-7882 • (608) 266-1832 • Toll-free (866) 615-7510
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damage before that many National Guard members got to Kenosha. Evers dispatched 500 troops to Washington in January for the inauguration. It took the deaths of 2 people, tens of thousands living in fear for three nights, and countless destruction before he sent that many people to Kenosha.

The best he could do? History shows he could have done better – and didn't.

But for me, what really proved Evers didn't do all he could was when I heard from a friend in Washington that Tuesday afternoon. With concern in his voice, my friend said that the President was ready to immediately send 500 people to Kenosha to help that night. With another one thousand people within a day. Within 10 minutes, I relayed this offer to Governor Evers and begged him to call the President. About an hour later, I made the request and the offer public. Like most in the area, and around the country, I was worried that Governor Evers wasn't doing enough to help. Now, at least there was hope.

Quickly, Governor Evers snuffed out that glimmer of hope. Rather than take help that was sorely needed, Evers decided to play political games. My office received a glib email from the Governor's office dismissing my plead to take and send more help to stop the riots. According to his spokeswoman, Governor Evers told the President he "would not need federal assistance in response to protests, but would welcome additional federal support and resources for [Wisconsin's] response to COVID-19."

When I saw that quote, I was furious. It still makes my blood boil today. The city was literally burning and rather than take the President's help, Evers told him to pound sand. Help was ready, available, and being offered. People were coming from all over the country to destroy the city, and Evers thought his 250 Guard members would be sufficient and he didn't need help.

Ask yourself seriously, do you think Evers had a handle on the situation and didn't need additional help to calm the riots? Of course not. Everyone, except the most die-hard partisans could see that then and now.

We know what happened next. After another night of destruction and after two people died, Evers relented. He took help from the president and other states. Massive manpower and resources were brought to bear that were absent the previous three nights, and the riots calmed.

I didn't write this to reopen the scars of a year ago. That serves no one and doesn't help heal the wounds of last August. But I also will not, and we cannot, let people try to rewrite the history of last year to sooth their minds. People need to learn from their errors, not bury them. Those who try to rewrite history are doomed to repeat it.

As Paul Harvey used to say: "Now you know the rest of the story."